



Introduction — Stress and Coping

Disasters can affect the lives of individuals like no other phenomena. For those directly affected, disasters create a sense of anxiety that can destroy individual peace of mind. They can create fears that wake people in the night and intrude on their thoughts during the day. The Cooperative Extension Service's job is to understand these fears and to provide some coping mechanisms for people who are experiencing them.

This chapter contains information to help you identify signs of stress in adults and children, suggests activities you can use to help people and offers ideas to facilitate community recovery from a disaster. This chapter is designed especially to offer tips and suggestions to parents about how to deal with their own and their children's reactions to a disaster.

Most of the material in this chapter was adapted from *Stress and Coping With Disaster: A Handbook Compiled Following the Midwest Flood of 1993 for Extension Professionals*, compiled by Marty Baker and Ami O'Neill.

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